



## World Health Organization (WHO) pandemic follow-up processes

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**The WHO has been committed to strengthening people's health and well-being for 75 years. This includes ensuring that as many people as possible have ready access to good healthcare, as well as preventing and controlling diseases. These efforts are also in the interests of Switzerland.**

- **At the WHO, two separate series of negotiations** are currently in progress:
  - negotiations on amendments to the existing International Health Regulations (2005);
  - negotiations for a WHO agreement on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

All WHO member states, or parties to the International Health Regulations, are participating in these important pandemic follow-up processes.

- **It is important for Switzerland to participate actively in the ongoing negotiations in order to ensure that its interests are appropriately represented.** Switzerland has an interest in promoting the future effective operation of international early warning and notification systems and in ensuring that all countries, particularly low-income countries, have the necessary capacity to detect and control communicable diseases. The recent pandemic demonstrated the importance of international collaboration, coordination and knowledge-sharing in transboundary health emergencies.
- Switzerland's position on specific substantive elements of the ongoing WHO negotiations is developed with the federal authorities involved in the country's health foreign policy adopted by the Federal Council, and fed into the negotiating process. Switzerland's positions for the ongoing WHO negotiations were defined in the Federal Council's decisions concerning Switzerland's participation in the World Health Assemblies of 2021, 2022 and 2023.
- The main aim of the discussions on the WHO pandemic agreement is to strengthen various aspects of international collaboration (e.g. research and development for pandemic-related products, early detection of pathogens presenting significant risks). In this connection, mandatory vaccination is not under consideration. The WHO can today already – as it did during the Covid pandemic – issue recommendations to member states, also with regard to pandemic control measures. However, these are not legally binding.
- In Switzerland, fundamental rights are protected at all times by the Federal Constitution and international law – in particular, the European Convention on Human Rights. Switzerland does not conclude any international treaties violating these fundamental rights.
- The WHO pandemic agreement will not restrict the sovereign rights of states to pass laws implementing their own national health policy. As a sovereign member state, Switzerland is free to decide whether to ratify a new agreement.
- **In the future, Switzerland will continue to decide independently on its own health policy and measures to be adopted in the event of a pandemic.**

The dates announced for the next rounds of negotiations are as follows:

Amendments to International Health Regulations: Geneva, 5–9 February 2024; 22–26 April 2024

WHO pandemic agreement: Geneva, 19 February–1 March 2024; 18–29 March 2024